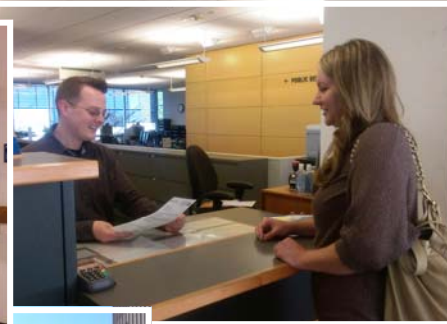
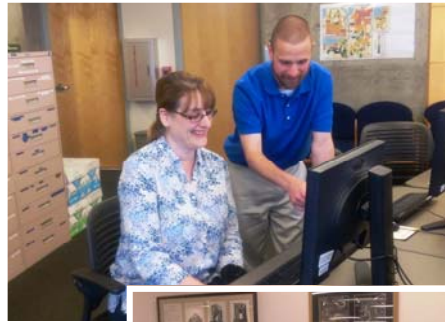




Snohomish County
Auditor's Office



Annual Report | 2014

Message from the Auditor

To our community:

2014 was a busy and exciting year for the Auditor's Office and our four divisions: **Elections**, **Licensing**, **Animal Control Services**, and **Recording**. We worked to strengthen the quality of our services and continued to develop and leverage strategic partnerships, opportunities to use technology, and the professional expertise of our staff. In addition, we completed temporary oversight of the county's Information Services Department and continued engagement in state-level organizations, where we learn from others and share our own best practices.

Elections, Licensing, Animal Control Services, and Recording each provide essential government services, which collectively impact more residents than any other county department or office. While our office performs a wide range of functions, our staff members are united by a commitment to delivering the highest quality of service in an efficient and effective manner, while responsibly managing public funds. Our four core values – **transparency**, **service excellence**, **accountability**, and **continuous improvement** – guide our operations as we continuously strive to build public and partner trust in our services.



I truly appreciate the continued dedication of our staff members, most of whom have served Snohomish County for 10-30 years. Their rich breadth of knowledge and experience, spirit of collaboration, and commitment to professional public service are invaluable assets to our office. I also want to recognize the volunteer advisory board members, community agencies, and partners within the county who provide on-going essential support for the delivery of our services.

I am proud of our many successes in 2014 and look forward to building on them in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Weikel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Weikel
Snohomish County Auditor

Elections Division

Mission: To conduct fair, accurate elections and encourage people to understand and participate in the voting process

Core Services

- Register voters within Snohomish County
- Update and maintain state and local voter registration databases:
 - Remove deceased voters and convicted felons from the voter rolls
 - Maintain jurisdictional boundary information
- Administer elections:
 - File candidates for local elected office
 - Design and print local voters' pamphlets, ballots, and other election materials
 - Ensure ballots are mailed to all eligible voters prior to each election
 - Maintain ballot secrecy and security
 - Process and count returned voted ballots
 - Publish election results
 - Conduct recounts
- Check voter signatures on local petitions
- Educate voters and potential voters through school election programs and other outreach tools

2014 Resources

- 8.5 full-time employees
- Approximately 165 years of experience combined

Voter Registration

At the end of 2014, the number of active registered voters in Snohomish County was 414,246. Historical trends show that the number of active registered voters continues to increase due to population growth. In Presidential General Election years, as people look to participate in these high-profile, high-interest elections, voter registration rates spike.

Voter registration is the foundation for an inclusive, accessible voting process, and the Elections staff works diligently to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of all voter registration activities.

2014 Elections

In 2014, the Elections staff conducted four elections, which featured the following:

- **February 11 Special Election:** ballot measures for 12 local school districts
- **April 22 Special Election:** ballot measures for the City of Arlington; the Everett, Index, and Lakewood school districts; and the Marysville Transportation benefit district
- **August 5 Primary:** federal, state, and local offices as well as precinct committee officers
- **November 4 General Election:** statewide ballot measures and federal, state, and local offices

Voter Outreach

In 2014, the Elections staff worked to increase voter registration and participation by:

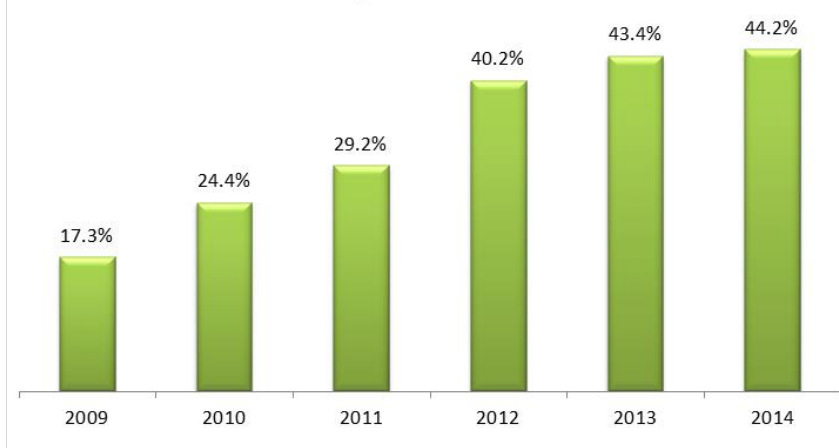
- Partnering with the League of Women voters to maintain voter registration forms at libraries, post offices, and other public places
- Participating in the informed voter radio and television advertising campaign led by King County for the 2014 Primary and General Election
- Registering voters and answering election questions at the October 11 candidate forum hosted by Snohomish High School students

Local Ballot Drop Boxes

Local 24-hour ballot drop boxes were first introduced in Snohomish County in 2009 as a convenient, postage-free alternative to returning ballots via the US Postal Service. They have increased in popularity each year. In 2014, 44% of all mail ballots were returned using one of the eleven 24-hour ballot drop boxes located across Snohomish County.

A list of ballot drop box locations is available at www.snoco.org/elections.

Ballots Returned via Local Drop Box



Elections Division (cont.)

Voter Turnout

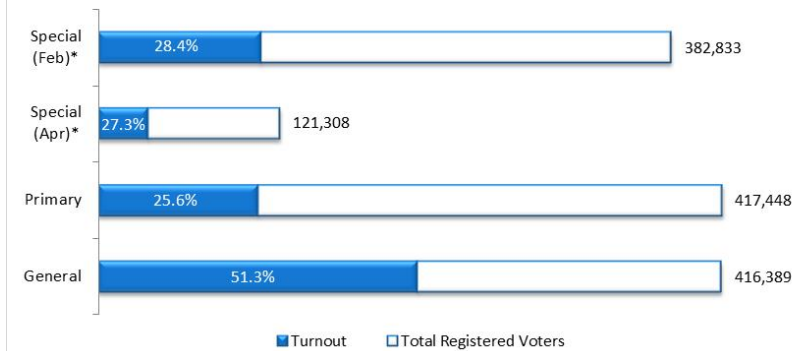
Turnout for the Special Elections was consistent with the historical trend of approximately 30%. The notably lower Primary turnout was a trend seen nationwide. While the General Election turnout was significantly higher than the other 2014 elections, in comparison with the turnout of prior Non-Presidential General Election years, it too was below average.

Voter turnout is significantly impacted by the races on the ballot and their level of competitiveness. The lack of a US Senate race, combined with a nationwide sense of voter apathy, likely impacted the 2014 Primary and General Election turnout.

General Election turnout can be increased when an election features high-interest statewide ballot measures in addition to candidate races. The 2010 spike in the middle graph highlights the influence a US Senate race can have on turnout.

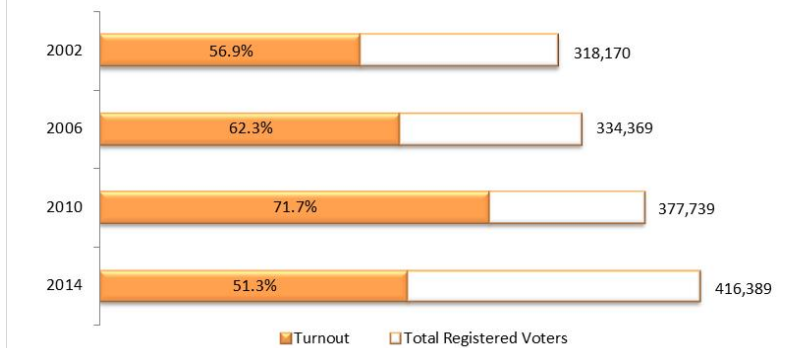
2014 voter turnout rates by age and gender reflected typical trends. As the bottom graph shows, age appeared to be a significant factor, while gender did not.

2014 Voter Turnout

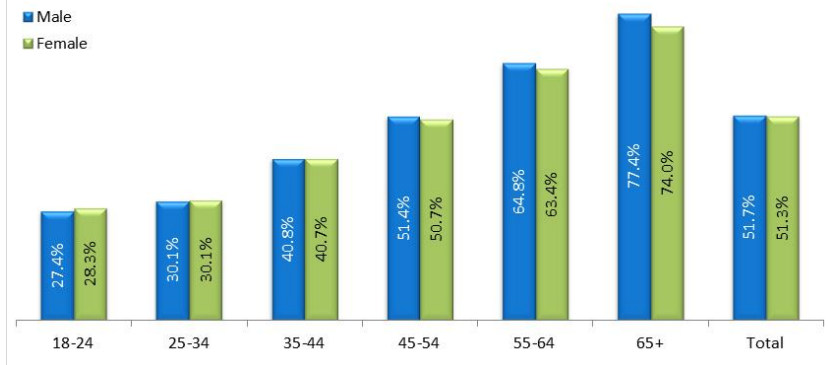


* Special Election data shows only the registered voters living within the boundaries of the jurisdictions with measures on the ballot.

Non-Presidential General Election Historical Turnout



2014 Registered Voter Turnout by Age Group and Gender



Contact Information

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Elections Division
Garth Fell, Manager

Administration West Building, 1st Floor
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, M/S 505
Everett, WA 98201-4046

(425) 388-3444
elections@snoco.org
www.snoco.org/elections

Hours:
Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

Though the Auditor's Office is plenty busy administering elections, providing tabs and titles for vehicles/vessels, investigating dog bites, and recording documents for customers, the office also encourages participation in statewide advocacy groups. Involvement in statewide organizations provides opportunities to learn from other counties and colleagues and to share best practices.

Highlighted below are two groups in which the Auditor's Office is active.

Washington Association of County Officials (WACO)

Auditor Carolyn Weikel has been an active member of WACO since 2007 and has served on the executive board since 2011. She was elected president of the statewide organization in October 2014 and will serve a one-year term.

WACO is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization comprised of assessors, auditors, clerks, coroners, prosecutors, sheriffs, and treasurers from Washington's 39 counties. WACO promotes better county government, advocates for all members, and serves as a liaison with local, state, and federal government.

As WACO president, Carolyn will utilize the organization's strategic plan to focus on legislative advocacy services, improve communications with members, and enhance member training opportunities.



Washington State Association of County Auditors (WSACA)

Auditor Carolyn Weikel is co-chair of the WSACA Licensing Committee. In this role, Carolyn meets with other members of the committee, state Department of Licensing personnel, and representatives from licensing subagencies to discuss issues that impact the delivery of licensing services to customers throughout the state. This unique committee balances private sector, local government, and state government interests in its mission to provide customers with a full array of licensing services regardless of location.



Licensing Division

Mission: To provide licensing services that protect people, personal property and the health, welfare, and safety of county residents

Vehicle/Vessel Licensing

In 2014, the Licensing staff processed nearly 300,000 vehicle/vessel title and tab renewal transactions, a 4.5% increase over the previous year. Snohomish County ranked third in the state behind King and Pierce Counties last year for total motor vehicle registrations.

More than 30% of all tab renewals were completed online, remaining consistent with prior year trends.

Subagency Oversight

The Licensing staff provides training and oversight to the county's 17 licensing subagencies, ensuring high-quality service delivery and compliance with Department of Licensing standards. In 2014, the Licensing staff:

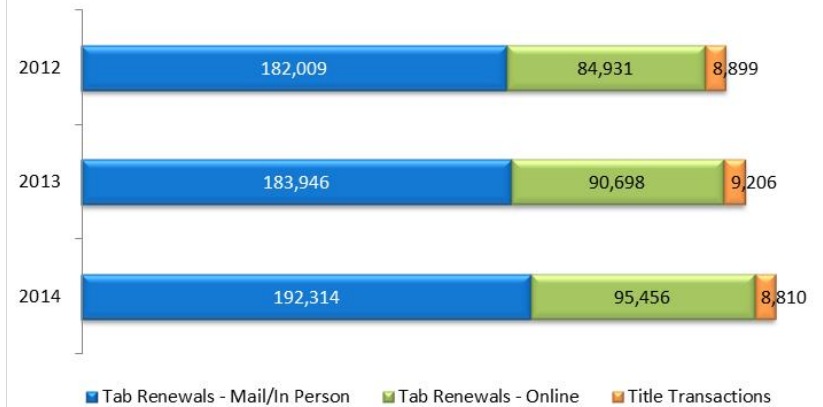
- Conducted two three-hour training sessions, focusing on vessels and infrequent types of transactions
- Provided support for the closing of the Stanwood subagency due to retirement and the opening of a new subagency in Smokey Point

The licensing subagencies were responsible for more than 900,000 vehicle/vessel transactions in 2014.

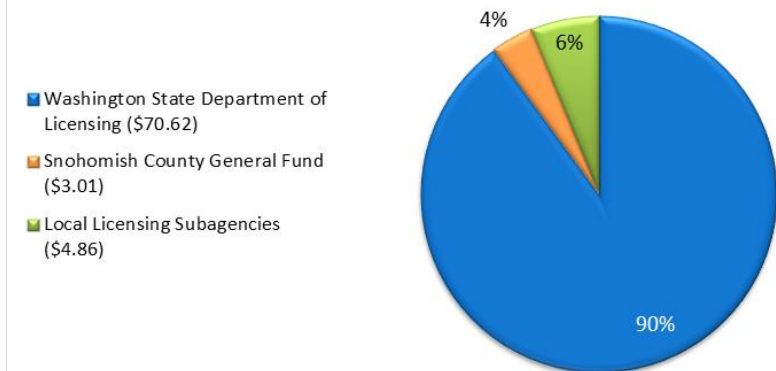
Fee Distribution

Snohomish County collected nearly

Vehicle/Vessel Transactions by Type



2014 Vehicle/Vessel License Fee Distribution



Note: Dollars shown in millions

\$78.5 million in state and local vehicle/vessel licensing fees in 2014, a 10% increase over the prior year primarily due to the improved economy.

Ninety percent of the licensing fees were allocated to the Department of

Licensing to support the state's transportation system, while the remaining funds were divided between the Snohomish County General Fund and the county's licensing subagencies.

Core Services

- Title and license vehicles and vessels in partnership with the Washington State Department of Licensing
- Train, oversee, and audit local vehicle/vessel licensing subagencies
- Issue dog and cat licenses (*unincorporated county only*)
- License kennels and other animal businesses (*unincorporated county only*)
- License adult businesses and employees (*unincorporated county only*)

2014 Resources

- 10.5 full-time employees
- Approximately 160 years of experience combined

Licensing Division (cont.)

Pet Licensing

Buddy, Max, and Lucy—these were last year's top dog names, according to the county's pet licensing records. Nearly 15,000 cats and dogs were licensed across unincorporated Snohomish County and the City of Everett in 2014.

With all cities now managing their own pet licenses, the Regional Pet Licensing Program was brought to an end on November 1. The county now licenses dogs and cats residing in unincorporated areas only.

Pet Licenses Issued



Kennel and Other Animal Business Licensing

The Licensing staff issued nearly 320 kennel and other animal business licenses in 2014. Private breeding and non-breeding kennels, where residents owned, kept, or maintained four or more dogs, continued to comprise more than three-quarters of all licensed kennels.

Kennel and Other Animal Business Licenses Issued

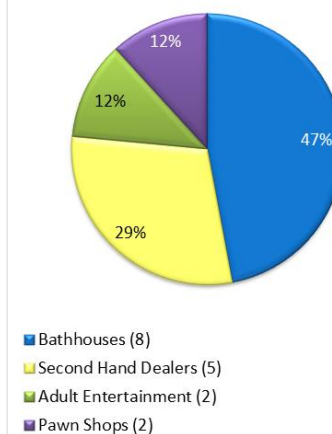


Business Licensing

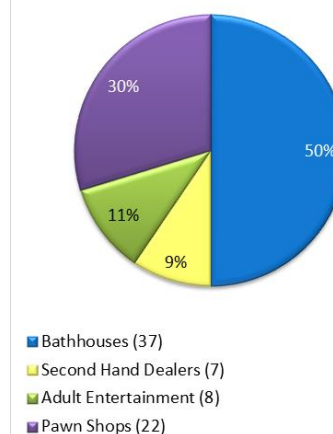
The division licensed 17 *select* businesses and their employees in 2014. These included adult entertainment, bathhouse, pawnbroker, and second hand dealer businesses, which pose a risk to the health, safety, and welfare of the county.

Last year continued the downward trend in business licensing volumes, which is primarily due to the countywide decline in the adult entertainment industry and other economic factors.

2014 Business Licenses Issued



2014 Employee Licenses Issued



Contact Information

Snohomish County Auditor's Office
Licensing Division
Vicki Lubrin, Manager

Customer Service Center
Robert J. Drewel Building, 1st Floor
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, M/S 506
Everett, WA 98201-4046

(425) 388-3388
contact.licensing@snoco.org
www.snoco.org search "licensing"

Hours:
Monday – Thursday, 9:00am – 5:00pm
Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm
Closed daily, noon – 1:00pm

- Work Opportunities Partnership ————— *Spotlight*

The Auditor's Office continued its more than 20-year partnership with Work Opportunities last year, relying heavily on the outstanding work and dedication of the six Work Opportunities enclave members and their supervisor. The Auditor's Office truly appreciates the following essential support that the enclave provided in 2014, which enabled the office divisions to deliver their services in an accurate and timely manner.

Vehicle/Vessel Licensing

Performed critical tasks in support of vehicle/vessel renewal processing, which included:

- Opening mail
- Validating payment information
- Matching tab numbers with registrations
- Inserting registrations and tabs in envelopes for mailing

In a typical day, 500-600 pieces of mail were processed, and a similar volume

of registrations with new tabs were processed.

Prepared license plates for mailing, which included:

- Matching the registration, license plate number, and tabs
- Applying tabs to plates
- Inserting plates and registrations in envelopes

Picked up, sorted, and delivered all incoming mail; sorted and dropped off all outgoing mail.

Pet Licensing

Prepared pet licensing packets for mailing.

Document Recording

Collated recorded document files daily.

Stapled recorded documents together after verifying the number of pages.

Prepared multipage marriage packets, ensuring a consistent supply for happy couples.

Packaged recorded documents for mailing back to customers.



*Christine, Matt, Mindi (Supervisor),
Michelle, and Butch
(Jacqueline and Roxanne not pictured)*

Work Opportunities is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting self-determination, self-respect, and valued participation in the community for persons with disabilities through work.

Animal Control Services

Mission: To provide responsive animal control services that protect the health, safety, and welfare of animals and residents of unincorporated Snohomish County; and to provide public education to encourage and promote responsible pet ownership and the humane treatment of animals

Animal Complaints

Animal Control Services Officers serve as valuable resources in the community. They promote understanding of animal laws, partner with pet owners and complainants to achieve compliance on animal-related matters, and have authority to pursue enforcement actions when necessary.

In 2014, Animal Control Services received nearly 2,000 calls, averaging 398 per officer. Calls ranged from complaints about nuisance animals to reports of vicious dogs and animal cruelty. Substantiated complaints that led to cases varied from simple leash law violations to in-depth investigations involving animal cruelty.

Animal Control Services issued more than 150 civil citations last year, and 26 dogs were registered as dangerous. In addition, Animal Control Services referred seven animal cruelty and eight vicious dog cases to the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office for criminal charges.

In 2014, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office successfully prosecuted six criminal cases, which Animal Control Services had referred between 2013

and 2014. Below is a summary of the convicted charges:

- Animal nuisance
- Dangerous dog violation
- Animal cruelty, first degree
- Animal cruelty, second degree
- Failure to bury carcass

Specialized Support for Other Agencies

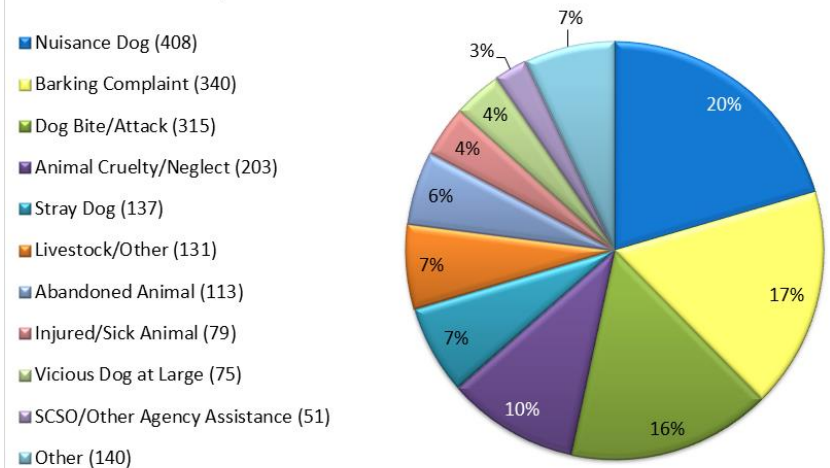
Animal Control Services Officers are specially trained and certified to handle a variety of animal-related situations in a manner that ensures public safety and the humane treatment of animals. They are special commissioned deputies by the Snohomish County Sheriff and provide

assistance to several agencies, including the Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, Parks Department, and small cities.

In 2014, Animal Control Services Officers assisted the Sheriff's Office and other agencies on more than 50 occasions. Common forms of assistance included:

- Containing aggressive dogs
- Removing dogs from the scene of a traffic accident or DUI arrest
- Removing animals from the home of a medical emergency or unattended death
- Containing livestock found on roadways

2014 Animal Complaints Received from Residents



Core Services

- Investigate animal complaints, dog bites/attacks, animal hoarding, and animal cruelty/neglect
- Capture and impound stray animals
- Return lost pets to their owners
- Assist law enforcement in securing animals when needed
- Inspect kennels and other animal businesses
- Educate residents about county code and state law pertaining to animals

2014 Resources

- 5.5 full-time employees
- More than 65 years of experience combined

Animal Control Services (cont.)

Kennel and Other Animal Business Inspections

Snohomish County Code requires the annual licensing of all unincorporated county locations *where a person owns, keeps, or maintains four or more dogs*. These include:

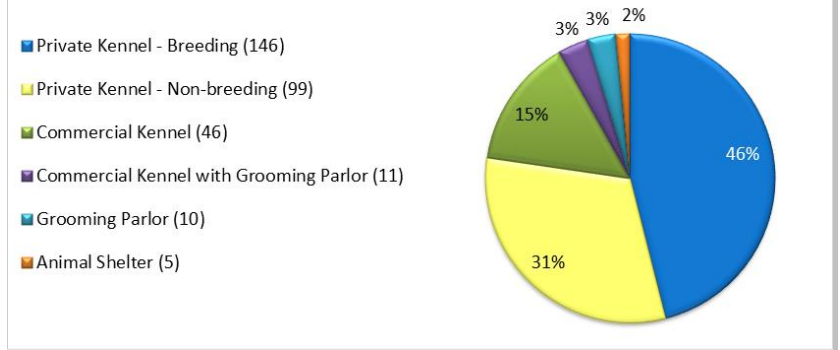
- Private and commercial kennels
- Grooming parlors
- Animal shelters
- Pet shops

Animal Control Services Officers inspect kennels and other animal businesses to ensure compliance with county code and promote the proper care and well-being of dogs. When conducting inspections, officers verify that all dogs appear to be in good condition and that properties provide adequate shelter, sanitation, and security. In addition, they confirm that each dog in a private kennel has a current Snohomish County pet license.

Shelter Services

Everett Animal Shelter has been a valuable Snohomish County partner for more than 20 years, and the sole shelter service provider for Animal Control Services since May 2012. Animal Control Services contracts with the Everett Animal Shelter to provide the following services for dogs and cats

2014 Kennel and Other Animal Business Licenses Issued



from unincorporated Snohomish County:

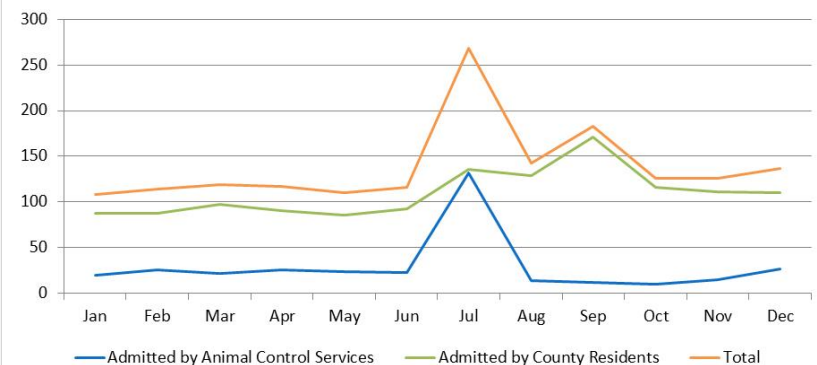
- Care, feeding, medical exam and treatment for lost and unwanted pets
- Assistance in reuniting lost pets with owners
- Finding new homes for adoptable pets that have been surrendered

While the volume of stray and unwanted pets has declined over the past several years, more than 1,650 unincorporated county dogs and cats

were admitted to the Everett Animal Shelter in 2014. Twenty-six percent of these were pets surrendered by owners who were unable to keep them for a variety of reasons.

Shelter staff members provide critical support for the county's animal cruelty, animal hoarding, and puppy mill cases. The July spike shown in the chart below reflects the seizure of 111 cats and kittens by Animal Control Services as part of an animal cruelty case.

2014 Unincorporated Snohomish County Dogs and Cats Admitted to Everett Animal Shelter



Contact Information

Snohomish County Auditor's Office
Animal Control Services
Vicki Lubrin, Manager

Customer Service Center
Robert J. Drewel Building, 1st Floor
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, M/S 306
Everett, WA 98201-4046

(425) 388-3440
contact.animalcontrol@snoco.org
www.snoco.org search "animal services"

Hours:
Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm
Closed daily, noon – 1:00pm

The Animal Advisory Board provides public education and community outreach about responsible pet ownership. It is composed of six licensed Snohomish County kennel owners and three county residents who represent a broad range of interests related to animal issues. The advisory board sponsors several programs and activities with Animal Benefit Bequest Funds.

American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Testing

The Animal Advisory Board sponsored its first American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test at the Mutt Strut event in Everett last August. Started in 1989, the CGC program is recognized as the gold standard for dog behavior and rewards dogs who have good manners at home and in the community. Eighty dogs participated in the event's 10-step CGC test, and approximately two-thirds passed, receiving an American Kennel Club certificate.

Free Microchip Clinic

The Animal Advisory Board also sponsored its 15th free microchip clinic at the Mutt Strut event. Over 100 pets received a free microchip, increasing the total number of pets microchipped by the program since 2003 to 3,000. Microchips are a safe and reliable way for owners to identify their beloved pets, increasing the chances for a quick return home if lost.

Public Education Campaigns and Outreach

Last year, the Animal Advisory Board conducted public education campaigns and outreach to raise awareness about:

- How hot summer months and cold winters affect pets
- Rabies vaccination for cats and dogs
- How to curb barking
- Responsible cat ownership
- Disaster planning for companion animals and pet-friendly shelters for emergencies

Donations

The Animal Benefit Bequest Fund is supported by donations, which can be sent to:

*Snohomish County Auditor's Office
attn: Animal Benefit Bequest Fund,
M/S 306
3000 Rockefeller Avenue
Everett, WA 98201-4046*



Canine Good Citizen Testing at the 2014 Mutt Strut

Recording Division

Mission: To serve as the official repository for recorded documents and provide public access to land transactions and contractual documents in Snohomish County

Document Recording

In 2014, more than 180,000 documents were recorded, a 23% decrease from the prior year. This trend, which was seen across the state, was largely attributed to stagnant interest rates and in turn fewer refinances of existing loans, as well as the uncertain housing market. Below are the top five document types, which represented more than 60% of all 2014 recorded documents:

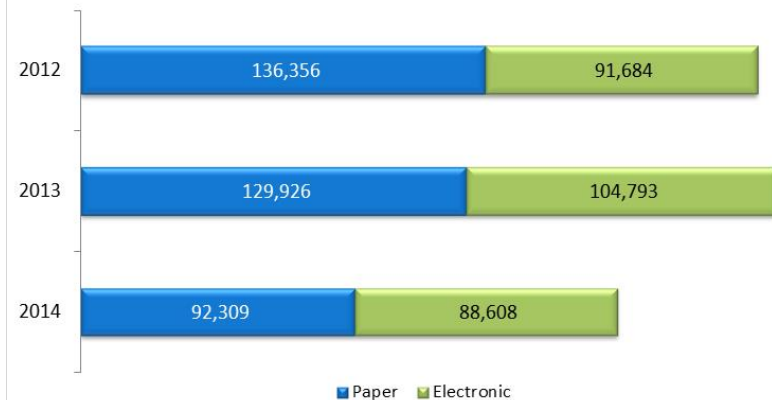
1. Deeds of Trust
2. Reconveyances
3. Excise Affidavits
4. Deeds
5. Substitutions of Trustee

Electronic recording (eRecording) has proven to be increasingly popular year after year. Nearly 50% of all documents were eRecorded last year, up from 45% the year before. A convenient solution primarily utilized by title companies, real estate professionals, and attorneys, eRecording allows document submission over the internet, saving time, postage, and potential travel to the office.

Document Research

In 2014, the Recording staff responded to more than 15,000 in person, by phone, or by email requests for research support. The most common

Documents Recorded by Method Received



research requests from the public were for certified marriage certificates, property-related documents, reconveyances, easements, and deeds.

In addition to public requests, the Recording staff responded to requests from title companies and internal county departments, such as Public Works and the Assessor's Office.

Microfilm Conversion Project

The Recording Division's Microfilm Conversion Project is an effort to convert nearly 3,000 rolls of microfilmed official public records (dated 1880-1997) to a digital format. The project is designed to make the

records more easily accessible to the public; improve efficiency for division staff, other county departments, and county business partners; and reduce expenses by eliminating the need to maintain microfilm reader machines.

Following contract completion in 2013, selected vendor Thomson Reuters spent 2014 implementing system modifications and performing the initial conversion of microfilm to digital images. A pilot of images and software tools is estimated to launch in early 2015.

Core Services

- Record paper and electronically submitted documents
- Index recorded documents for ease of public access
- Make recorded documents publicly available through in person customer service center and online access
- Help customers search recorded documents
- Provide certified copies of recorded documents
- Issue marriage licenses
- Register and reserve plat and condominium names
- Register process servers
- Maintain filed copies of public disclosure forms for county candidates and officials

2014 Resources

- 10.5 full-time employees
- More than 125 years of experience combined

Recording Division (cont.)

Marriage Licensing

The Recording staff issued more than 4,500 marriage licenses in 2014. As the chart to the right shows, the weekly number of marriage applications in 2014 followed prior year trends, including the annual summer peak—the best time of year for couples hoping for a dry, sunny wedding in Washington.

Recording Fee Distribution

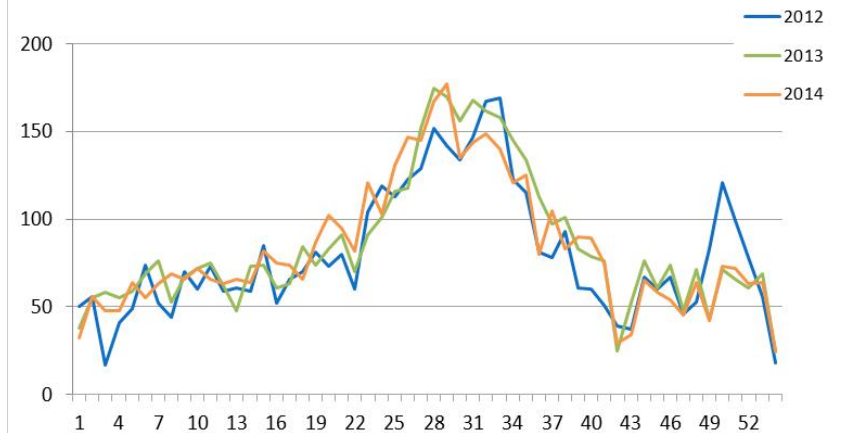
During the 2014 legislative session, the Washington State legislature passed SB 5875, which added a \$40 surcharge to all documents with limited exceptions. The new surcharge was adopted to benefit homeless housing programs throughout the state.

The chart to the right shows the distribution of the \$72 fee for a standard recorded document in Snohomish County. Less than 8% is allocated to the county's General Fund.

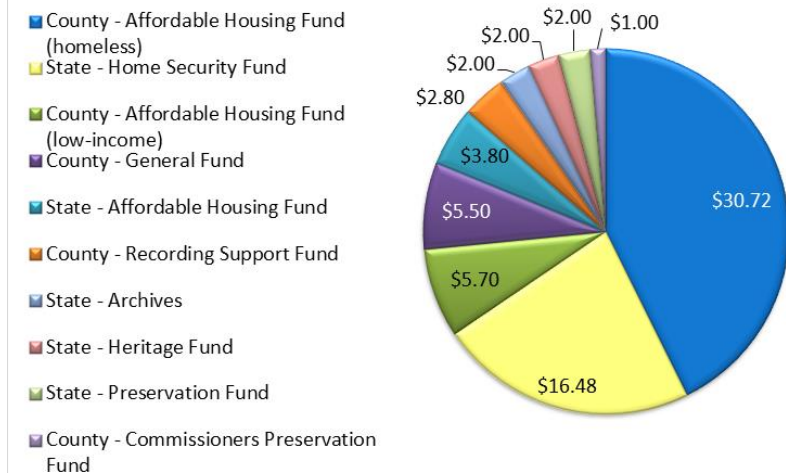
Archival Records Preservation Grants

Each year, the Auditor's Office provides grants through a competitive process to qualified projects designed to preserve archival, historic, or permanent Snohomish County government documents. In 2014, funds were awarded to the Clerk's Office, Facilities, and Planning and Development Services.

Marriage Applications by Week



Recording Fee Distribution
(Standard Recorded Document)



Contact Information

Snohomish County Auditor's Office
Recording Division
Garth Fell, Manager

Customer Service Center
Robert J. Drewel Building, 1st Floor
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, M/S 204
Everett, WA 98201-4046

(425) 388-3483
contact.recording@snoco.org
www.snoco.org search "recording"

Hours:
Monday – Thursday, 9:00am – 5:00pm
Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm
Closed daily, noon – 1:00pm

- Auditor's Office and Information Services — *Spotlight*

Auditor Carolyn Weikel was given temporary oversight authority of the county's Information Services Department (IS) by the County Council from spring 2013 through fall 2014. While Carolyn could have simply adopted the role of caretaker and allowed the department to run on its own, she instead chose to become actively involved in the functions and operations of the county's information technology (IT) program. There were many challenges in taking on this new role, least of which was learning IT jargon!

From day one of this new assignment, Carolyn wanted to provide strong leadership and be a powerful advocate for the department. By all accounts, she accomplished both. In addition to the execution of IT projects in cooperation with offices and departments and regular IT maintenance and operations, the following was accomplished:

Public Records

Formalized policies and procedures for county response to public records requests.

Focused attention on the technical resources and personnel needed to adequately respond to public records requests.

Staffing and Resources

Acquired two full-time employees (FTE) to focus solely on using technology to gather responsive records and coordinating a comprehensive response to countywide public records requests.

Served as an advocate for three additional IS FTEs to help rectify a backlog in much needed server and application upgrades.

Procured additional funding for the technology replacement program to reinstate the five-year replacement

schedule for county computers as recommended by best practices.

Established career development opportunities for IS help desk personnel, including training and certification to encourage advancement.

Communications

Encouraged additional outreach and improved communications with departments and offices on technology needs.

Worked closely with the IS communications team to ensure IS publications would be more powerful, easier to read, and better understood by target audiences.

Increased the understanding of how IT projects are approved, funded, and scheduled by working closely with the Information Technology Advisory Committee.

Enterprise-wide Projects

Expanded Wi-Fi capabilities on the county campus with the goal of full Wi-Fi access by the end of 2015.

Moved efficiently through the contracting process to procure a web design company that produced a new and improved county website.

Operations

Worked to increase compliance with the county code that requires all offices/departments to use IS as a partner on all IT acquisitions, including software and hardware purchases.

Began the process of centralizing an asset management system for all IS hardware, software, and configurations for which IS has responsibility to ensure one master inventory record managed by IS.



Snohomish County
Auditor's Office

Carolyn Weikel, County Auditor
Connie Barndt, Chief Deputy Auditor

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